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ABSTRACT

The momentum of Outcome Based Education (OBE) appears to be growing. This paper presents an overview of OBE and its prospects for successful educational change. Successful implementation requires 3 to 5 years; the involvement of administrators and staff in the development process; the use of a top-down approach; alignment of all areas with one another; and innovative scheduling. Opponents of OBE include traditionalist Christians who believe it violates their values and some middle-class Americans who have been misinformed. Proponents see OBE as another learning theory with great potential. There is a lack of empirical evidence to support or negate the effectiveness of OBE. The paper concludes that OBE appears to be a promising way to reform an antiquated and ineffective educational system, although it is unlikely that every school will adopt OBE. (Contains 25 references.) (LMI)

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OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION: IS IT MASTERY LEARNING ALL OVER AGAIN, OR IS IT A REVOLUTION TO THE REFORM MOVEMENT?

A Paper Presented
by

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at the

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OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION: REFORM OR REVOLUTION?

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ABSTRACT

In researching Outcome-Based Education I was primarily interested in learning how it worked, was it successful, where was it being implemented, and how do others feel about it?

School districts are finding that it takes three to five years to implement Outcome-Based Education. It is important to involve administrators and staff in the process of developing Exit Outcomes, Learner Outcomes, and Objectives. It is imperative that a top-down approach be used and that all areas, including the grading system, be aligned with one another. Time is also a crucial element. Idealistically, students will reach mastery of goals, or outcomes, at their own pace. The school year will not be limited to nine months, nor the class periods to a set number of minutes per day. In this way, a student is rewarded for completion of outcomes, not of each year spent in school.

It appears that Outcome-Based Education is being used in thirty states. Additionally, a few states have mandated specific outcomes, but it is up to the districts to determine how these will be met.

There are as many pros as cons for the utilization of Outcome-Based Education. On the one hand are fundamentalist and traditionalist Christians who oppose Outcome-Based Education because it violates their values. These groups have not reached a consensus as to what they specifically oppose. There are also the middle class Americans who have been misinformed or have listened to rumors, but have not based their judgments on actual facts.

Pro O.B.E. groups believe that this is an extension of other learning theories which had showed promising results but were never quite accepted. The method of mastery over time allows students to work at their own pace in order to achieve.

There does not appear to be research that indicates that O.B.E. is effective nor ineffective. It is possible that schools have not implemented it long enough to have compiled statistical data. Reports from two areas indicate an increase in the graduation rate and the number of college bound students, and a significant increase in the SAT, ACT, and CAT scores.

There are many positive attributes to the O.B.E. program, some questions still unanswered, and possibly more refining to do. I believe we have enough information to say this looks promising and offers a needed change to an antiquated and ineffective educational system.

Outcome-Based Education: Reform or Revolution?

Introduction

A tidal wave of change may be approaching the hallowed halls of education. Depending on one's perspective, Outcome-Based Education may be viewed as a revolt or an opportunity to revolutionize education; to clean the slate of negative attitudes, to regain credibility, and to eliminate failure.

Outcome-Based Education promises to do all this and more. Knowing nothing about this topic left me vulnerable to all the salesmanship of the journal articles. In my favor were prior knowledge and experience with Mastery Learning.

Although the comparison of Outcome-Based Education to a tidal wave was an over-estimation of what is taking place now, still, the momentum seems to be gaining. President Clinton's Goals 2000: The American Education Act will certainly do a lot to foster the development of O.B.E., providing the United States government gives the financial support that will enable these goals to move from idealism to realism.

The questions that continue to lurk in the background are: Will Outcome-Based Education be greeted by the majority of educators to the tune of, "This too shall pass away."? Will it travel across the nation with districts jumping on and off the bandwagon?

The Direction of O.B.E.

William Spady believes that the O.B.E. movement can go in two directions: educational systems that are the most removed from the past's fundamentals will have the greatest potential. Others will maintain content bound objectives will have half the reform with half the result (Zlatos, 1994, p. 29). Spady is optimistic in his predictions. It is important to look at other forecasts in order to understand his presumptuousness.

When in the course of human events it becomes evident that our present system of education is failing, it is imperative that change take place. Yet, many in education coin the phrase, "If it's not

broke, don't fix it!" Many disagree with this attitude and for very valid reasons. When the report A Nation At Risk was published, pressure for change began to mount.

International testing during the last twenty-five years indicated that American education is assuredly not excellent, "...our students have usually placed at or near the bottom," states Ravitch (Walker, 1992, p. 24). Additionally, at the 7th Annual Outcome-Based Education Conference, Dr. Alan Cohen (1992, p. 34) projected that:

- By the year 2000, there will be twenty million unemployable people,
- 1 in 4 persons will be illiterate,
- 1 in 5 babies will be born in poverty,
- 1 in 9 babies will be born to unwed mothers.

Diane Ravitch (1990), former Assistant Secretary, O.E.R.I., U.S. Department of Education, tells us that "...81% of the public and 65% of the teachers believe that American education needs national standards" (p. 25).

In the Fall of 1991, the U.S. Department of Education funded the National Academy of Science. Science educators were asked to determine what children should know and be able to do in Science. The same is happening with the National Center of History in the Schools at the University of California in Los Angeles and with the National Endowment for the Arts (Ravitch, 1990, pp. 25-26).

Dr. Chester Finn (1990), Director of the Educational Excellence Network of Harvard University, gives credence to this by affirming that the demand for change will create a new definition for compulsory education. It "...will come to mean engaging in some form of systematic study until one attains a specific level of knowledge and skill, rather than sitting in school for a set number of years (p. 591).

The latest push has been from outside the framework of the educational spheres. Two hundred of America's largest corporations have established the Business Roundtable. In an effort to demonstrate their concerns for the caliber of worker U.S. schools are producing, they have "...adopted

nine Essential Components of a Successful Educational System. Having a system based on performance or outcomes was second on the agenda" (Zlatos, 1994, p. 27).

With educational and business sources in agreement we have to reflect on the reasons why change has not come sooner. In actuality, there have been many attempts at reform and it is important for us to briefly review the major attempts that have been made over the past forty years.

Forty Years of Attempted Reforms

The idea of reforming or at least refining education is not new. Those who have been in teaching for a few decades have seen many theories come and go. It is no wonder that some skepticism has developed. Some theories have been like brightly colored helium balloons; they floated gently upward with many hands grabbing on to the string, pulled by the winds of enthusiasm. Sometime down the road the helium depleted, hands slipped off, and the balloon of change disappeared into the distance only to be replaced by another.

This brief overview will show you why many teachers take a "wait and see" approach to new theories.

- 1950 - Ralph Tyler's Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction. His definition of an objective was, that which should identify both the behavior and where it should be applied.
- 1961 - Bloom and colleagues and Magers all emphasized the importance of taxonomies (the framework of instruction) and behavioral objectives (the methods). These gave clarity to the process of instruction.
- 1963 - Glasser developed the Criterion-Referenced measurement. This reflects a student's performance along a continuum from no proficiency to perfect performance. This same year Carroll's Model of School Learning was presented.
- 1963 - Carroll developed a Model for School Learning. He believed that the degree of learning can be determined by the amount of time spent and all students could learn.

- 1963 - Bloom's Learning for Mastery Model, based on Carroll's Model, varied instruction and time to meet student needs. Use group instructional techniques.
- Late 1960s - Competency-Based Education was designed to respond to concern of the changing job market (Evans & King, 1991, pp. 73-74).

Outcome-Based Education: Models

A Culmination of Educational Models

The word outcome means result. The process that leads to the result is far more complicated. Outcome-Based Education is truly the result of bringing together and refining many of the educational models that had come before it. In researching this topic I found that to thoroughly explain it, I would have to write a book. Instead, I will share the following key points: O.B.E. - defined, forms of O.B.E., how outcomes are defined, the O.B.E. framework and delivery model, grading, alignment, public relations work, and O.B.E. accreditation.

O.B.E. - Defined

Professional journals contained a variety of definitions for Outcome-Based Education; the one that follows encompasses the basic thrust of the design. "Outcome-Based Education calls for determining the skills, knowledge, and habits of mind that students should be able to demonstrate in order to prepare for life after graduation" (O'Neil, 1993, p. 46).

The philosophy of O.B.E. is based on three premises:

1. All children can learn.
2. Success breeds success.
3. Schools control the conditions of success (Spady & Marshall, 1991, p. 67).

There are four characteristics that lead to the end result:

1. Learner outcomes are clearly identified.
2. A child's achievement determines their progress.
3. Pupils' needs are met through multiple instructional strategies and authentic assessment tools.

4. Pupils have the time and assistance to reach their potential (See, 1994, p. 30).

Three Forms of O.B.E.

The past history of educational reforms has shown that, with implementation, it sometimes takes on a different connotation. These variations have often led to a watered-down effect and the eventual doom of the reform. Outcome-Based Education is not immuned to past practice. We have yet to determine whether the three forms currently being implemented by schools is a natural maturation process or if O.B.E. will succumb to the fate of the others.

The Traditional Form.

In this model of Outcome-Based Education, efforts at change have been based on the utilization of the existing curriculum. The basic premise lies in mastery of the objectives defined by the text. This approach is synonymous with Curriculum-Based Objective. The curriculum design comes before the outcomes. The staff is encouraged to determine what elements of their curriculum are deemed most important. With that, students are then expected to show mastery through their performance. The curriculum, instruction, and assessment are aligned and everything is designed around them. What differs from the original, Transformational O.B.E., are time and programmatic constraints. Students are still expected to reach mastery within predetermined class time or school year. Although learning success is greatly increased there are five issues of concern with the Traditional model (Spady & Marshall, 1991, pp. 68-69).

1. Demonstrations of outcomes are often limited because the instruction was limited to a particular unit that is an end in itself.
2. The original curriculum is still present only selective elements are actually taught with more clarity. These may or may not reflect real-life demands.
3. The student is expected to learn, perform, and test within the classroom environment that is most likely a poor comparison to the reality of the outcome.
4. The critical issues of nine-month attendance, credentialing, and placement are not addressed. The primary focus is on unit and course outcomes rather than on designing

the curriculum as a means of reaching the outcomes (Spady & Marshall, 1991, pp. 68-69).

The Transitional Form.

Caught in the middle of Traditional and Transformational models, districts that implement this model are beyond the desire to utilize the current subject-matter curriculum. They are preparing to identify significant outcomes by exploring that higher-order competencies are important for the graduate's success. Although they are postponing the challenges of restructuring, they are still using significant exit outcomes and then designing the existing curriculum around these. Although there is less consideration of what future conditions students need to prepare for, nevertheless, there are concerns for what the graduate should know, do, and be like if they are going to be successful.

Districts who commit to Transitional O.B.E. appear to go through three stages of maturity as they implement their exit outcomes.

1. Incorporation: Staff needs to come to the realization that the text and outlines of the subject are only part of the focus of instruction.
2. Integration: The focus now becomes the exit outcomes. All departments and programs begin interdisciplinary planning and use the text as a base with the primary focus on the achievement of the exit outcomes.
3. Redefinition: This begins the final stage that leads to Transformation Outcome-Based Education. The determination of subject content priorities is based upon important concepts, issues, problems, and processes. These are refined further until truly significant outcomes are determined (Spady & Marshall, 1991, p. 70).

The Transformational Form.

In contrast to the current educational system and traditional O.B.E., Transformational Outcome-Based Education incorporates all four principles into its design:

1. Clear Focus on Significant Outcomes: all facets of the program are aligned to achieve the exit outcomes.

2. Design-Down Process from Outcomes: ensures that the goals are the primary focus.
3. Emphasis is Success for All: all student are to accomplish high performance levels over time and are given credit for them.
4. Extended Time and Support: all students are assured additional time and help so they can be successful in demonstrating outcomes (Spady & Marshall, 1992, p. 14).

Since this is the ideal model of Outcome-Based Education, as we currently know it, this will be the one that will be explained further. Many questions came to my mind as I struggled for knowledge regarding the latest wave of reform. There are multitudes of issues involved, therefore, it was necessary to limit them to the major topics that would enable the reader to formulate a picture of how Transformational Outcome-Based Education works.

Moving Toward O.B.E. Reality

Gathering Ideas

Rather than stumbling through a maze in search of the perfect, flaw-free, Outcome-Based Education design or using the "do-it yourself" approach, the following steps may save a district time, money, and frustration:

- Research the successes and failures of other O.B.E. programs.
- Start small and then expand. Use enthusiastic staff as you begin.
- Balance theory with reality.
- Put the students needs and well being first.
- Remember that outcomes need to be measurable, not vague.
- Inservice staff, have a supportive administration (Kudlas, 1994, p. 35).

Outlining Outcomes

The determination of outcomes is most effective when staff, administration, parents, and community members work together to outline what students should know, what they should be able to do, and what feelings and beliefs they should have by graduation. The mission statement should

then be written. Before writing the Exit Outcomes the group should ask how the schools can help students:

1. Become self-directed learners.
2. Employ problem-solving and decision making skills.
3. Express themselves creatively.
4. Adapt to and create change by utilizing skills.
5. Enhance and sustain self-esteem.
6. Demonstrate concern, tolerance, and respect for others (Fitzpatrick, 1991, p. 18).

After the outcomes are written the Program Outcomes are then determined and aligned with the Exit Outcomes. These should be performance-based determiners of achievement.

Since the most important element of Outcome-Based Education is the design-down effect, it is only logical for the Outcome-Based Curriculum to follow the Program Outcomes. Curriculum teachers begin by outlining the sequence of learning. They must keep in mind what higher order outcomes have to be achieved. The curriculum is then designed by including various paths that the learner can take to achieve the goal. For some students more courses may be needed; this will depend on their entry level skills and to what degree prerequisites were mastered.

Design Indicators: Outcome Determiners

In order to determine if program outcomes have been met, the O.B.E. program must have predetermined design indicators that are based on performance. An example of this would be:

- Uses observation to acquire knowledge and information.
- Classifies and organized information.
- Makes inferences and supports them.

At the achievement level there are three levels of difficulty:

1. The knowledge base related to the outcome.
2. Its practical application is demonstrated.
3. The transfer of learning allows the student to apply knowledge to a new situation.

Level one indicates direct instruction. Levels two and three show a shift to coaching and facilitating, respectively. The goal of Outcome-Based Education is not only the mastery and application of information, but also the attainment of greater independence in learning (Fitzpatrick, 1991, pp. 18-21).

Expanded Opportunity

The unique part of Outcome-Based Education is the fact that failure is not absolute. Built into this system of Mastery Learning is an element called Expanded Opportunity. By using frequent formal assessment, educators are able to determine if there is a need for remediation or extra help. In some O.B.E. districts there are instructional resource networks whose databanks give teachers a variety of instructional strategies, learning activities, and assessment options.

Program Evaluation

Once the master plan has been developed, evaluation of the program should be an ongoing process. Haas (1992) recommends that, to determine if the program is productive, you should ask the following three questions:

1. Is measurable learning the actual basis for student placement and progression through the school and system?
2. Are exit outcomes and their logical prerequisites, those that have been identified as significant by the professional associations in each subject field?
3. Is the credibility of the diploma, as a trustworthy indicator of achievement, enhanced (p. 100)?

The Grading Paradigm

The final element that is critical to the discussion of Outcome-Based Education is grading. Most districts have found that conventional grading no longer aligns with the outcomes, nor the process in which they are achieved. It is difficult to imagine something other than letter grades. Many schools do find the change difficult. Most of the programs are giving an A, B, or an incomplete because the fear exists that higher education institutions, staff, and parents will not accept O.B.E. grades. Spady

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believes that "...our present system is based on five key elements: evaluation, credentialing, selection, motivation and control, and psychological dependence (1991, p. 62). In the evaluation process, grades are based on quality, success, achievement, and possibly subject issues such as attendance, class participation, and behavior. Credentialing is driven by grades, as is course credit. Both of these are calendar dictated; students must put in the required time. Spady (1991) says, "The paradigm is time-based, credit is time-based, grading is time-based, and graduating is time-based." He aptly defines grading by stating, "It is a symbolic representation of the qualitative judgment that a teacher places on some set of student behaviors and accomplishments over a specified time period in a particular arena of learning" (p. 63-64). Grades are perceived to be so important that they influence many important decisions; they are directly related to a student's entry into college. Other factors, such as participation in sports and scholarships, hinge on good grades and controls as well as influences a student's motivation. The concept of grades is so ingrained in our minds that, psychologically, they tell the student, parent, teachers, and future employers if the student is "ok". How does a school district change a traditional part of our educational system? The key to this answer lies in the involvement of everyone who is affected by the change: administrators, teachers, parents, students, and even the community at large.

Designing O.B.E. Grading

A committee of devoted and enthusiastic supporters of O.B.E. must be in agreement that a student's achievement is based on the demonstrated mastery of the outcomes. They must also realize that success is no longer rooted in the letter grade received on a worksheet or a test. Frequent assessments only help to determine where a student knowledge lies along a continuum that leads to mastery. The answer to the issue of accountability and documentation is the record keeping which is computerized for each student. As the objectives are met, they are checked off as being mastered. The new grading system must reflect this new philosophy.

When Clyde Miller Elementary School, in Aurora, Colorado, faced designing an O.B.E. reporting system that excluded letter grades they decided to use Rubics. This is a scale that ranges from one

to four. One indicates that the student is getting started, two refers to making progress, three shows that the student meets standards, and four reflects that the standards have been exceeded. In the journal article there are samples of Aurora's Student Progress Report for content and Learner Outcomes (Kinney, Perry, 1994, p. 24). The content of this report came about when the Aurora staff recognized the need to align the outcomes with their accountability system. They used a process approach to the new grading. Parents and staff worked together along with a consultant who had helped them to develop authentic assessments. Aurora believed that understanding and acceptance of the grading system would be important to the success of the program.

Public Relations and O.B.E.

When Aurora's committee had completed the progress report they held a special P.T.A. meeting to explain how the new grading system worked. At the first grading period, brochures and surveys were sent home. At the end of the second quarter, Parent-Teacher Conferences were held. It was found that the card was still too technical. As a result, they revised it to make it more user friendly. I was impressed by the diligence and commitment that was made by these people because it was made not only to those it served but to the Outcome-Based Education Program as well.

Evaluating Outcomes

The single most important fact to remember about Outcome-Based Education is that a student's success is based upon their successful demonstration of the outcome. Grades are not accumulated on their attempts at learning. One school district went so far as to train observers so that demonstrations of outcomes were determined by more than one person. In this way, objectivity would be maintained. Despite claims of ambiguity, by O.B.E. opponents, professional articles indicate that this is a systematic approach to education.

O.B.E. and Credibility

The credibility of Outcome-Based Education has been under great criticism. As with many other issues, even the licensing of teachers, proving the trustworthiness of the program is extremely important if it is to be accepted by colleges, traditional school districts, teachers, parents, students, and

the community. In order to gain respect and trust it is necessary to insist that high standards be used by all who profess to be Outcome-Based Education schools.

O.B.E. Accreditation

The Outcome-Based Accreditation process will undoubtedly assist this movement in gaining the attention and respect of professionals and the general public. The network of Outcome-Based Schools developed a process that contains two components. All staff members are required to complete a questionnaire. Board members are requested to complete one but not required to do so. After this there is a two day on-site visit by the evaluation team. The Team is composed of administrators and teachers of other O.B.E. schools. Each team member represents a specific discipline and receives a one-half day orientation on that criteria. The remainder of their time is spent interviewing five to seven teachers and/or administrators. The interviewer responds orally and is often asked to provide documentation to support their response. The first group of team leaders were trained and certified in 1992 and again in 1993. You can see that the accreditation process is relatively new (King, 1992, p. 30). The literature did not state if any districts had been accredited yet. We must consider that developing an O.B.E. school takes three to five years. Some schools are still moving from Traditional to Transitional forms. Others are processing into the Transformational form. It may take more time before we actually read about O.B.E. accredited schools. The Educational Research Service reported that a national study of high schools indicated:

- 26.3% are using O.B.E,
- 32% are using partial O.B.E.,
- 14.1% plan to introduce it in 1995,
- 26.8 had no plans to implement it.

Overall, Outcome-Based Education was being used more frequently in private schools, 34.1% as compared to public schools, 25.4% (Cawelti, 1994, p. 11). There was no mention of the percentage of elementary and middle schools implementing O.B.E.. Throughout the articles I have read (found in the References) there were various states, districts, and schools that are implementing this

to different degrees. I have compiled a list of these and included a brief summary of their involvement (see Appendix). According to O'Neil (1993) thirty states have identified student outcomes but only Pennsylvania has omitted the use of Carnegie Units (p.47). Despite the support of the states, Outcome-Based Education continues to encounter opposition.

Opposition to O.B.E.

When over half of the states have defined outcomes, then why isn't Outcome-Based Education being accepted by everyone in every state? The answer lies in the belief system of those people who are involved.

The traditionalist and fundamentalist Christians adamantly state that O.B.E. contradicts their values. They have not reached a consensus on what specific parts are objectionable. They believe that since Christianity is the only true religion that you cannot teach that all religions are equal and acceptable. However, it is acceptable to restate this by saying that all people are equally valid and that they have the right to practice the religion of their choice (Burron, 1994, pp. 73-75).

Another point made by these religious groups is that O.B.E.'s objectives are ambiguous; its scope and sequence are unclear, the goals are vague, and the outcomes are not objective because the content courses are affective.

Their objections also include the feeling that Outcome-Based Education promotes the indoctrination of social, political, and economic values. As part of the O.B.E. objectives, students are asked to work cooperatively, compromise, and reach a consensus. This may lead to a violation of religious and familial values that are absolute. They fear that if their children do not compromise then their grades and academic placement will be effected (Burron, 1994, pp. 73-75).

Fundamentalists and traditionalist Christians are not alone in their opposition to Outcome-Based Education. The following arguments are a summation of the reasons given by those opposed to this form of education.

- It demands great teacher effort.
- Outcomes are state or district edicts.

- It requires time, talents, and resources.
- No mature O.B.E. programs to model from.
- No ready-made programs.
- The age of graduate varies, from 15 to 20 years of age.
- Outcomes are vague.
- Outcomes are difficult to assess.
- Values cannot be measured.
- O.B.E. waters down local control.
- Carnegie units may be dropped.
- No predetermined cost estimates.
- No evidence that it works.
- Requires funding for teacher inservicing.
- New testing assessments are required.
- The curriculum needs revising.
- Non-traditional outcomes.
- Outcomes don't have to be learned at school.
- Tracking may be the result.
- No uniformity from district to district.
- Children who transfer schools may be behind.
- O.B.E. language is businesslike and dehumanizing.
- Designs and results of O.B.E. aren't certain yet.

In reading numerous negative articles, I found that some were based on emotionalism. They appeared to reflect a philosophy that would deny change because it was unfamiliar and, therefore, an uncomfortable state. Others were ignorant of the lengthy and time consuming process that occurred prior to implementing O.B.E.. Some writers had obviously not researched who designs the steps that would lead to the mastery of outcomes. Even critics of Goals 2000 did not recognize that there would

be more freedom for schools to implement new ideas. The same is true for Outcome-Based Education. Many of these critics were probably opposed to Mastery Learning, Criterion-Referenced Testing, objectives, etc. For these critics, opposition is a way of life because new ideas shake the roots of their belief system. These individuals are incapable of adapting when change is necessary for the betterment of society. This rigidity may also be linked to a general distrust of the government that, in turn, leads mainstreamed Americans to believe rumors and half-truths.

O.B.E. - A Positive Viewpoint

Proponents of Outcome-Based Education believe that traditional education is ineffective. Our nation's children are at risk, illiteracy rates are on the rise, there is a positive correlation between violence and illiteracy, and we know that violence in the community and in schools are increasing. High school diplomas are losing their credibility because standards for graduation have become watered down and so have teachers' expectations of students. As long as this trend continues, students will continue to work with less diligence, nothing more is required of them.

In order to regain credibility, decrease illiteracy, and foster greater student expectations, we must change our current methods of teaching. Methods classes for teachers have repeatedly taught that there are individual learning styles and different modes of learning. Yet, until O.B.E. was implemented, no one chose to recognize the fact that individuals also learn at different rates. The majority of educational institutions continue to expect everyone to learn within the allotted class time or in a nine month school year. Not only is this a disservice for the slow or disabled learner, but for the gifted and talented as well. Outcome-Based Education is not a new concept; it is a tested tradition that we can see taking place in bar exams, drivers' license exams, doctoral dissertations, and many apprenticeship programs. All of these are based on the outcome and many have a time flexibility that allows for differences in rates of learning.

Many believe that, in addition to the extended learning time and enrichment, O.B.E. is also beneficial for these reasons:

- Learning is focused.

- There are raised expectations.
- Greater student accountability.
- Expanded opportunities.
- In-depth learning opportunities.
- Quality problem solving is stressed.
- Flexibility allows for mastery learning.
- Various teaching approaches are encouraged.
- Students take responsibility for their learning.
- Motivated students can enrich their learning.

(Kudlas, 1994, pp. 32-33).

It is time to allow and encourage other paradigms in education. Whenever a different system is utilized, be it in business, the medical profession, or technology, it takes time to refine. There will always be the pessimists who condemn before they see how the final product looks, acts, and produces. We will soon be able to reflect on O.B.E. models and see what the results have been.

The Johnson City Central School District in New York has been involved with O.B.E. for several years. Since they began the program they report a decreased drop-out rate and increased scores in the CAT tests, as well as on state regent exams. Connecticut reports a larger number of students are graduating as well as an increase in the numbers entering college. Glendale Union High School District students have exceeded the criterion-based tests that they have used for years (Brandt, 1993, p. 69-70).

CONCLUSION

In 1985 the Education Research Service reported that high achieving schools' number one asset was their goal-oriented instruction programs. Outcome-Based Education is founded on the performance of goals as well. I believe that within the next three to five years we will see many more positive results reaped from O. B. E. programs. Although I was unable to locate specific research that indicates its success rate, I believe that, based on what we know from the use of objectives, goals, criterion

referencing, and mastery learning, we can determine that O.B.E. has a strong foundation. It has taken these theories, refined and organized them, to formulate its foundation. In addition, I personally advocate Mastery Learning Programs and I believe that individuals learn at different rates, in different ways and through various modalities. It is my professional opinion that our present system of education is no longer effective for a large number of students. It is time to renovate and rejuvenate, but to also reflect on the characteristics of education that are effective. Unfortunately, I also believe that our biggest obstacle will be to convince teachers who are believers in what was. These individuals fail to recognize that education must be modified in order to meet the needs of todays changing society. They are the first to criticize how the learning atmosphere has changed, but also the last to try to accommodate those differences by creating a different learning environment. It will take time, money, and great effort to change the current educational system in to one based on the Outcome-Based Education philosophy. For this reason, I have doubts as to whether we will ever see every school implementing O.B.E. Programs.

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